



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HERITAGE TRAIL DESIGNATION DOCUMENTATION FORM

All applicants must meet ownership, access, historic significance and documentation levels 4 or 5 to be eligible for listing on the Underground Railroad Heritage Trail. Only the original building or a replica of the original building at the original location will be eligible.

I. PUBLIC OWNERSHIP and ACCESS- All sites must be accessible to the general public and all site owners must fit into one of the following categories:

- Government (municipal, state or federal)
- Non-profit organization
- Church or religious institution

Ownership

- ☐ Not-for-profit organization
☐ Church or Religious organization
☐ Municipal, State or Federal

Name of Owner _____

Access

What hours/days/months is the site open to the public? _____

Open by Appointment only to the general public? ☐ Yes ☐ No

National Register Status:

- ☐ National Register of Historic Places
☐ State Register of Historic Places
☐ National Historic Landmark

Is the listing related to the UGRR, anti-slavery or slavery in New York State? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of Property

Historic name _____

Current name (if different than above) _____

Location

Street & number _____

City or town _____ County _____

Use

Current Use _____

Historic Use _____

Construction date _____ ☐ Check if circa or estimated date

Documentation of this date

Has the structure been moved? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, when? _____

Have there been major alterations to the structure? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, the describe alterations

Overall condition of structure

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

Photographs: Please provide representative color photos of interior and exterior labeled with location (one set of color photos and 4 color copies are required).

II. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE – All sites must be associated with at least one of the following and must be an original building or a replica of the original building at the original location:

- Major Underground Railroad personality

A figure who was known on the national scale and had a lasting effect on the movement, e.g. Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, John Brown

- Freedom-seeker(s) (escaped slave), or those who assisted them

This would include a safe-house(station), residence, workplace, or a settlement (defined as a cluster of homes in close proximity where a number of freedom-seekers settled) or a church congregation that was actively involved in the UGRR or anti-slavery movement and/or that held anti-slavery meetings.

- Person(s) who were influential in the Anti-Slavery movement

“Influential” in the anti-slavery movement means that the presence of individual in the movement and their views steered the movement and to a great degree determined the actions of many people involved in the movement. Examples would be movement leaders, anti-slavery newspaper publishers or Vigilance Committee leaders.

- Slavery in New York State

Where the site can provide the visitor an in-depth and individualized understanding of the personal life, social relationships and culture of the slave(s) who lived at the site, based on documented research. Sites wishing to apply under this category must meet the Slavery Interpretive Criteria level 4 or 5 – see below.

Check all that apply-

☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Yes ☐ No

A Major UGRR personality

B Freedom-seeker or those who assisted them

C Person(s) influential in the Anti-slavery movement.

D Slavery in New York State

Provide the name of any report, survey or multiple property study that identifies the site as being associated with one of the above areas of historic significance (Enter “N/A” if not applicable). Examples: Multiple Property Nominations for the National Register of Historic Places or a study report done by a museum, research center or educational institution.

III. DOCUMENTATION- Sufficient documentation is key in determining actual involvement in the UGRR. A record proving attendance at anti-slavery events is not sufficient evidence of “active involvement.” Active involvement is demonstrated by proof of the following: a prominent or leadership role in the anti-slavery movement and/or evidence of at least one instance of assistance to a freedom-seeker when coupled with a pattern of other anti-slavery activity and/or using their resources to advance the movement.

UGRR/Anti-slavery Involvement Criteria¹

All sites must meet levels 4 or 5 of the criteria to demonstrate that the site is associated with the UGRR or Anti-slavery movement.

Level 1- **No clear evidence of involvement.** Local oral history concerning the UGRR, but no other evidence connecting owner/resident or site to anti-slavery or the UGRR.

Requires further research to establish an UGRR connection.

Level 2- **Some possibility of involvement.** –Owner/resident may have been named on a list of people who attended a county anti-slavery convention or signed an anti-slavery petition, but there is no evidence of influential anti-slavery involvement.

Requires further research to establish an UGRR connection.

Level 3- **Evidence of involvement inconclusive.** Evidence of owner/resident support of the anti-slavery movement, some local oral history, but no conclusive evidence of active involvement in the UGRR and/or influential role in the anti-slavery movement.

Requires further research to establish an UGRR connection.

Level 4- **Considerable evidence of involvement.** *While no one piece of evidence is conclusive of UGRR or influential anti-slavery involvement, there exists numerous pieces of circumstantial evidence, coupled with strong oral history of UGRR involvement, that when taken as a whole make a compelling case for influential anti-slavery or UGRR active involvement, and there is no contradictory evidence. If the site is a church, then a church congregation was actively involved in the UGRR or anti-slavery movement or held anti-slavery meetings. Convincing evidence would be a record of church initiated anti-slavery resolutions, open letters or petitions.*

Meeting this criterion is sufficient to establish an UGRR connection.

Level 5- **Conclusive evidence of involvement.** - *Primary evidence² is provided offering conclusive proof that the owner/resident was actively involved in the UGRR, influential in the anti-slavery movement, or a freedom-seeker. At least one compelling source of primary evidence, consistent with other evidence, such as construction date and property ownership records, must be submitted with no contradictory evidence known.*

Meeting this criterion is sufficient to establish an UGRR connection.

Slavery Interpretive Criteria

Level 1- Mention of slaves in the property inventory of site owners or bill of sale or account records, but no current interpretation beyond the mention of the presence of enslaved people within the household.

Level 2- Some mention of enslaved people in slaveholder letters or diaries but no substantive information concerning the enslaved beyond their role as property. Some interpretation regarding the presence of enslaved people.

Level 3- The life of the slaves as property is well interpreted, including their work and living arrangements. It may also include information regarding the food provisions, clothing, household items and furniture provided by slaveholders and general information regarding the overall health and the punishment received by the enslaved.

¹Based upon the scale developed by Dr. Judith Wellman of SUNY Oswego

²Primary evidence – materials left behind by the participants such as letters, diaries, account books, statements given to and printed by newspapers at the time events happened, census records, petitions, court records, etc.

Level 4- Interpretation of the site portraying enslaved peoples as individuals with their own perspective and lives separate from that of the slaveholder. Sites must provide interpretation of the personal lives and/or beliefs of the enslaved based on compelling sources documenting the life, labor, community and culture of the enslaved at the site. Sites must provide an understanding of the social relationships of the enslaved within the enslaved community and with the slave owner. Sites must acknowledge the political, economic and cultural factors that place slavery in its proper historical context. The requirements of this level can also be met by accurately depicting the hardship and emotional turmoil of the lives of the enslaved in such a way that the visitor is encouraged to empathize with the enslaved. Sites must demonstrate that slavery is a major interpretive theme conveyed to all visitors via tours and/or exhibits.

Level 5- In-depth interpretation of the personal life and beliefs of the enslaved based on first-hand accounts of the lives of the enslaved. Sites must demonstrate that slavery is a major interpretive theme conveyed to all visitors via tours and/or exhibits.

Narrative Statement (limit 2 pages typed) Please state and document, including citations, the reasons why this site meets criteria levels 4 or 5. Attach bibliography on separate sheet and list **all** sources.

Form Prepared by:

Name/Title _____

Organization _____

Street & Number _____

City or Town _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

I attest that the information provided in support of this designation is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature _____ Date _____

Checklist – Please submit original plus 4 copies of the following by March 31st 2004:

- ☐ Completed & signed Documentation Form For Underground Railroad Heritage Trail Designation
- ☐ Photographs: Representative photos of interior and exterior labeled with location
- ☐ Narrative Statement (limit 2 pages typed)
- ☐ Bibliography

Please mail to: Heritage New York
Corning Tower Room 2328
Albany NY, 12242

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - REVIEW COMMITTEE ONLY

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ More Research Recommended

Comments: _____

Evaluated by (name): _____ Date: _____